

## WHAT ARE FOOD STAMP BENEFITS?

The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program that helps low-income individuals buy nutritious food needed for good health.

Food Stamp households may have earned or unearned income or may be receiving public assistance. Many Food Stamp participants are people who have temporarily fallen on tough times

## SPENDING YOUR FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

Food Stamp benefits can only be used for purchasing food or plants and seeds to grow food for your household to eat.

Food Stamp benefits cannot be used to buy:

- any non-food item, such as pet food, soaps, paper products, etc.;
- alcoholic beverages and tobacco;
- vitamins and medicines;
- any food eaten in the store; and
- hot foods.

Benefits are not to be used to pay off existing grocery accounts or to purchase food for non-household members. Sales tax is not charged on items bought with food stamp benefits.

## HOW CAN I APPLY?

You can pick up an application either in English or translated in Spanish, at any Family Support Division (FSD) Customer Service or Resource Center. You can request an application be mailed to you or you may download an application at our website at [www.dss.mo.gov](http://www.dss.mo.gov).

You may return the application in person, by mail, or by fax to any Family Support Division (FSD) Customer Service Center or Resource Center.

If you need to, you may ask someone you trust to apply for you. That person is called your **Authorized Representative**.

Once your application has been filed you may be interviewed by phone or in person. You will hear about your eligibility for Food Stamp benefits within 30 days.

## WHAT IF I HAVE NO MONEY AND CAN'T WAIT 30 DAYS?

In some emergency cases, you can get Food Stamp benefits in seven days or less. A decision about emergency benefits is made when we receive your completed application and verify your identity. A person who knows you may identify you for this purpose

## WHO IS COUNTED AS PART OF MY HOUSEHOLD?

A household is an individual or a group of people who buy, prepare, and eat food together.

## CAN I HAVE INCOME AND STILL GET FOOD STAMP BENEFITS?

Yes, the amount of income you can have and still get Food Stamp benefits depends on the number of people in your household. Your gross monthly income, before deductions, must be less than the amounts listed below:

Household Size	Maximum gross monthly income**
1	\$1,245
2	\$1,681
3	\$2,116
4	\$2,552
5	\$2,987
6	\$3,423
7	\$3,858
8	\$4,294
For each additional member add \$436	

\*\*These amounts are effective October 2013

If your gross monthly income is under the limit, a Food Stamp eligibility specialist will figure your

net income (income after deductions) to determine if you are eligible for Food Stamp benefits.

Deductions include expenses such as dependent care costs, medical bills (if you are age 60 or older, or are disabled), and some shelter costs.

If you think you may be eligible, contact the Family Support Division Information Center toll free at 1-855-FSD-INFO (1-855-373-4636).

## WHAT KIND OF PROPERTY CAN I OWN?

Some items that you own are counted in figuring eligibility and some are not.

### Items NOT counted include:

- a home you are living in;
- personal belongings;
- cash value of life insurance policy; and
- vehicles.

### Items that WILL be counted are:

- Cash on hand; and
- Savings and checking accounts.

All of your counted property is added together and the total must be less than \$2,000.

If your household has one member 60 years of age or older, or who is disabled, you can have up to \$3,250 in counted property.

## INFORMATION WE WILL NEED BEFORE WE CAN COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION

You do not have to have this information to make your application, but you will have to give it to us before we can decide if you will receive Food Stamp benefits.

- Identification showing your name.

- Proof of income for the last thirty days for those in your household that are employed.
- Proof of income such as Social Security payments, Supplemental Security Income, Child Support, Pensions, etc.
- Medical bills if you are 60 years of age or older, or if you are disabled;
- Proof of legal immigrant status for each non-citizen for whom you are applying. You do not have to tell us the immigrant status of any individual, but you will not receive Food Stamp benefits for that individual.
- Social Security Number (SSN) for each household member for whom you are applying. If you choose not to provide a SSN of an individual in your household, you will not receive Food Stamp benefits for that individual.

If additional information needed your eligibility specialist will discuss this with you and assist you in getting the information.

***SOME THINGS YOU MAY ALSO BE ASKED TO PROVIDE:***

- Bank book or current bank statement;
- Receipts for childcare or the care of other dependents who cannot care for themselves; and
- Utility bills and rent receipts.

***NOTICE***

If your application is denied or not acted upon with reasonable promptness, or after approval your benefits are reduced or discontinued, or you believe we have not followed the Food Stamp Law and Regulations, you may ask for a hearing.

Your eligibility specialist will help you file an appeal.

***CIVIL RIGHTS LAW***

In accordance with Federal Law and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability.

Any person who believes s/he may have been the object of such discrimination may file a written complaint with any Family Support Division (FSD) Customer Service or Resource Center or with the USDA, giving the specific details as to how and when the discrimination took place.

Send complaints to the:

Office of Civil Rights  
P. O. Box 1527  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

For more information, contact the Family Support Division Information Center toll free at 1-855-FSD-INFO (1-855-373-4636).

Missouri Department of Social Services  
P. O. Box 1527  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

*To file a complaint of discrimination write:*

USDA Director  
Office of Civil Rights  
Room 326-W  
1400 Independence Avenue S. W.  
Washington, DC 20250-0410  
call (866) 632-9992 (voice and TDD),  
1-800-877-8339 (Federal Relay for  
hearing/speech impaired) or 1-800-845-6136  
(Spanish)

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**MISSOURI'S  
FOOD STAMP  
PROGRAM**

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